

REFERENCES

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FROM FIELD AND STUDY

A Ring-tail Possum at Midland Junction.—In recent years the Ring-tail Possum (*Pseudocheirus occidentalis*) has become a comparatively rare animal and it is of interest, therefore, to record the capture of a live individual at Midland Junction on February 24, 1958, by Mrs. H. Hudson. The animal first made its appearance at her home, right in the town, a fortnight previously, living on her grapes and sleeping in an old hat on the back verandah. It was a young female, still possessing its milk teeth and I estimated that it was two months out of the parental pouch. The body length was about 4½ in. and the total length about 12 in. The extremely long tail was covered dorsally with fine white fur and below was rat-like. It did not appear to use its tail, as the Brush-tailed Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) does, for balance, but it could hang by this appendage when compelled. The body was covered with very dense black-brown fur, which was paler ventrally. It did not use its teeth for defence at any time. It fed mainly on fruit juice, bread, flowers and lettuce.

The animal is not caged and is allowed full liberty. It still (April 1959) comes when called and displays marked affection for its foster parents.

—ELIZABETH BAILEY, Nedlands.

Record of Scarlet-chested Parrot.—Although first collected in Western Australia, in the 1840s, the Scarlet-chested Parrot (*Neophema splendida*) was not again observed in the State until 1941 (*Emu*, 54: 280). Two further recent records have been published (Serventy and Whittell, *Handbook*, 1951, p. 233).

In Sept.-Oct., 1956, the writer accompanied Dr. A. R. Main, Dr. Frances Benediet and Mr. R. D. Royce on a University expedition to the Zanthus area. On Sept. 30, while driving a few miles from Coonana, a small parrot which appeared predominantly light blue, flew close to the truck. On walking through the scrub at the spot a small parrot which flew into a dead tree was flushed from dry grass. Dr. Benediet and the writer were able to approach close to the bird, a male Scarlet-chested Parrot, and watch it for some time with binoculars. The following field description was taken down: "deep blue head, scarlet from throat to breast, orangey feathers on thighs, dark green back, blue feathers in wings." As no red was seen on the bird which flew past the truck it was presumed to be a female.

The general habitat was a slope with a sparse short tree and

shrub cover consisting mostly of *Acacia burkittii* with some mulga (*A. aneura*) and kurrajong (*Brachychiton gregorii*). At the base of the slope were occasional small salmon gums (*Eucalyptus salmonophloia*) and a few mallees (*E. foecunda*, unnamed variety). The ground cover consisted largely of fairly sparse dried grass.

The plants were identified by Mr. Royce.

—J. H. CALABY, Canberra.

Scarlet-chested Parrot at Laverton.—Since our arrival at Laverton in April 1956 the first record of the Scarlet-chested Parrot (*Nocophema splendida*) was made in February or March of 1957. This was a male bird which was brought in by a school girl who found it alive with a damaged wing near a fence close to the township. The weather had been particularly stormy, and the parrot had apparently become a victim. In spite of every care the bird was found dead next morning. The brilliance of the colours was most noticeable. The main points, from memory of an accidentally destroyed kodachrome of the subject, were: (a) the nuggety shape of the parrot, unlike the slenderness of the budgerigah; (b) beautiful blending of blues on the head and throat; (c) deep, almost orange-yellow abdomen; (d) brilliant red breast; (e) beak very dark grey. There was a rich green on the back and some blue on the wings.

Bird watching has been carried out at many windmill troughs since then, but there were no further records until March 30, 1958, when a possible sighting of a pair was made along a creek 8 miles N.E. of Laverton. These birds flew into mulga and were observed by the writer and wife, though not through binoculars. The birds were fairly timid and flew before a very clear view could be obtained. Most noticeable, through the light screen of foliage, was the splash of brilliant red on one bird. The country around Laverton is chiefly flat mulga plains with many dry watercourses along which mallee grow frequently.

—KEVIN GRIFFITHS, State School, Laverton.

Extension of Known Range of Some Western Australian Birds.—The following observations extend the range of four species of birds as outlined by Serventy and Whittell in their *Birds of Western Australia*.

A Painted Quail (*Turnix varia*) was flushed from the ground at the deserted Naendip Copper Mine on March 7, 1958. The mine is located in low stony hills near the head of Dempster Inlet (30 miles west of Hopetoun). The vegetation around here is mostly mallee (*Eucalyptus annulata*, *E. redunca*, *E. tetragona*, *E. platypus*, and *E. ichmanni*) but in the immediate vicinity of the mine there is a relatively open stand of flat-topped yate (*E. occidentalis*). The previous easternmost record of the species was at Broomehill, 110 miles to the west.

To be added to the list of breeding stations of the Bridled Tern (*Sterna anathaeta*) are Seal Island (1½ miles east of Cape Leewin) and Green Islets (30 miles south of Jurien Bay). On January